

I am writing in opposition to the proposal to build a database of information concerning air travelers. This information will supposedly be used to help protect the U.S. against terrorist activity. However, it seems to me that this proposal would do little to increase our safety, but would result in a significant reduction in the civil liberties of American citizens. It is during times such as this, when it is so tempting to institute efforts to increase the safety of Americans that we need to be careful that those efforts do not impinge on the very civil liberties that have made our country a beacon of hope to millions around the world.

As I understand the proposed action a database of information regarding the travel habits of everyday Americans would be gathered and held in secrecy. Individuals would have no right to examine the information gathered about them. Without such access persons would be unable to correct any misinformation in their file. Furthermore, such a system, by targeting anyone who travels by air effectively treats all persons as potential criminals and allows dossiers to be assembled about them without their being convicted - or even suspected of - any particular crime. Such surveillance activities are reminiscent of those undertaken by such notorious organs of state repression as the former Soviet KGB and the Nazi Gestapo. Such screening and surveillance activities are a direct assault upon the freedoms that Americans have traditionally and by law enjoyed. I urge you to reject this proposal as the ineffective crime fighting tool that it would be. No such system deserves a place in American society and its adoption would mark yet another step along the path of increasing the police powers of the state.

Thank you for your consideration,
Ronald D. Morley